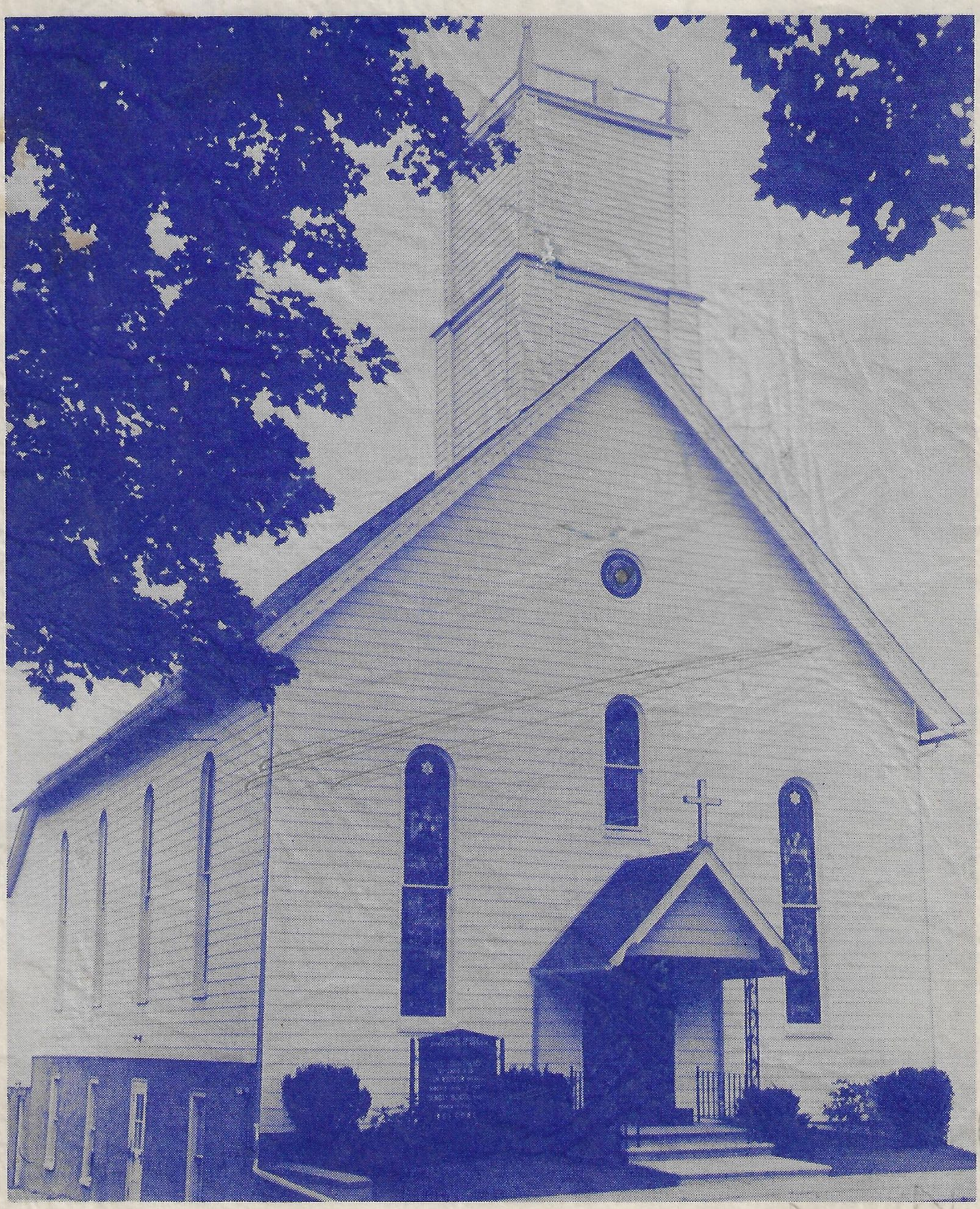
1881 1956

75th Anniversary

September 23 to 30, 1956



BETHANY EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH

Pen Argyl, Pa.

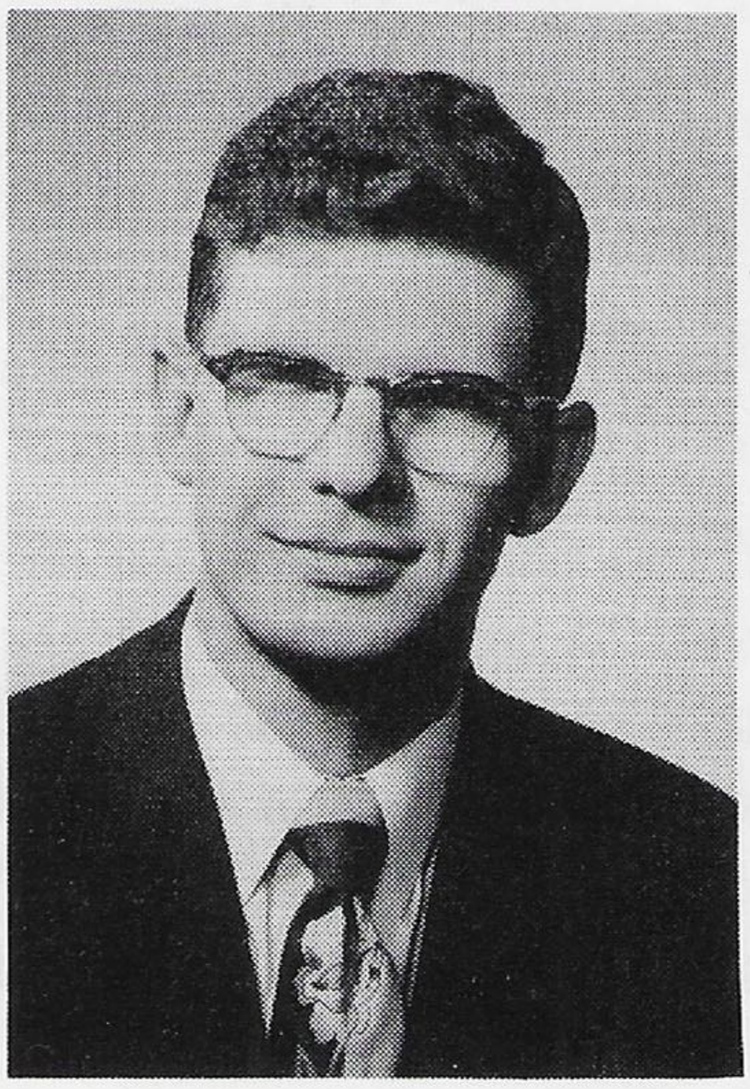
PASTOR'S GREETINGS

Greetings to all members and friends!

We greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, whose name is above every name. It is in Him we live and move and have our being. It is by His grace that a ministry of 75 years' duration has gone forth from Bethany Church.

It is our privilege to be in a succession of noble men of God. Twenty-six pastors have preceded us in this field of labor. They have poured of their time, talent, energy, and physical means into this work. Many of them have passed on to their eternal reward; some remain with us as witnesses of the ongoing congregation at Bethany. All of them have left behind a contribution and a challenge. It is our desire that the pastor and congregation of today may sense their indebtedness not only to the former pastors but also to the dedicated laymen who have labored and sacrificed here. Also it is our prayer that we may measure up to the challenge to go forward in the years that are ours to work, so that the coming generation may rise up and say not only *with* us, but also *of* us, "Well done, faithful servants."

Working these nearly four-and-a-half years with the people of Bethany Church and the community has been a pleasure. There have been many causes for rejoicing; we have seen triumphs of faith and the moving of God's hand in the lives of individuals, as well as in the Church as a whole. There have been times of sorrow and disappointment which have proven to be trials of faith to burn out the dross and purify us before God. These all enter into a pastorate and are used of God to bring pastor and people closer to Him and closer to one another.



It is our purpose in the days that lie ahead to draw closer to Him whom to know aright is life eternal. We would see more souls find Christ, more Christians fully dedicate themselves to God, more young people fall in love with Him, more parents build Christian homes. We trust you will join us in an all-out effort to make these aims a reality through prayer, witnessing, and sacrificial giving. God will pour out His favor when He sees us earnestly seeking to do His will.

Your friend and pastor,

ELWOOD L. HEISER

The present compiler of the historical record of Bethany Church is largely indebted to the Rev. W. H. Christ and Brothers E. J. Kress and F. D. Bieler for the information prior to 1940. Data recorded from 1940 has been gathered in the main from the Council of Administration (formerly the Official Board), Local (or Quarterly) Conference and church historical records.

REV. E. L. HEISER

August, 1956

HISTORICAL RECORD

The exact date of the beginning of the congregation known as Bethany Evangelical United Brethren Church, Pen Argyl, cannot be traced. There has been sufficient information gathered, however, to authenticate a starting point as early as 1880, when the denomination was known as The Evangelical Association. The early nucleus of the congregation worshipped in various homes of Pen Argyl, among which were the homes of John Moyer, Quintus Sandt, Mrs. Milton Bitz, and others.

As the congregation grew, a more settled place of meeting was secured in Gross' Hall, now Weaver's Pharmacy, at the corner of Pennsylvania and Robinson Avenue. Dr. C. L. Gross owned the building and was a member of Bethany Church. Members of our church, still living, who attended the Sunday School and Church in Gross' Hall are F. D. Bieler and Sarah and Bertha Werner. The Sunday School had an enrollment of 60. Mr. Linford Jones was the Superintendent of the Sunday School as well as the Class Leader of the Church.

The earliest record of Pen Argyl as a preaching appointment of the Evangelical Association is 1881, when the Rev. W. H. Stauffer was pastor and Wm. H. Weidner, junior pastor, of the Bath Circuit, which comprised the following churches: Bath, Bethesda, Bushkill, Nazareth, Pen Argyl, Wind Gap, Plainfield (Benders), Ackermanville, Bangor, Millers, and Rocksburg (Five Points).

At the Fourth Quarterly Conference of the Circuit, held January 21, 1882, Pastor William H. Weidner, who was acting as secretary, presented the necessity of having a church at Pen Argyl. As a result Stephen Heller was appointed ". . . to see upon what conditions a lot upon which to erect a church can be secured." At the Quarterly Conference meeting in Salem Church, Bath, July 28, 1883, the decision was reached not to build a church above the railroad. Reverend Weidner and Brother L. A. Heller were appointed to see about a church lot in

Pen Argyl and report back at the next meeting. At the Third Quarterly Conference of the Bath Circuit, with the junior pastor, Rev. W. Shuler, acting as secretary, it was reported that no lot could be secured free below the railroad for church purposes. It was then decided that as soon as $140 be secured, the lot belonging to Rev. W. H. Weidner be purchased for church purposes. The final action authorizing the building of a church edifice in Pen Argyl, ". . . which shall cost about $3500," was taken in 1884, presumably at the First Quarterly Conference. Pastors of the circuit were R. Deisher and W. Shuler.

There is no record of the exact month or day on which the cornerstone was laid, but it may be reasonably deducted that it occurred in the latter part of September or early October. The minutes of the Third Quarterly Conference held October 11, 1884, record Reverend Deisher as reporting progress of the Pen Argyl Church building and announcing the laying of the cornerstone. The edifice was completed at a cost of $4723.95, including the cost of the lot. It was formally opened August 2, 1885, Bishop Thomas Bowman presiding. Rev. Reuben Deisher, assisted by Rev. A. E. Williams, was the first pastor in charge. The membership at this time numbered 42, and is listed as follows:

Lynford Jones, Jacob and Catherine Bruch, Joseph and Catherine Moyer, Francis and Julia Eckert, Anthony Snyder, Isaac and Mary Laubach, Emma Speer, Rev. D. Bartholomew, Philip and Sarah Repsher, Nancy Snyder, Sarah Godshalk, Sarah Lobb, Tillie Lobb, Charles Bieler, Garrett Quick, Lucinda Quick, A. C. Godshalk, Sabina Godshalk, John W. and Martha A. Kressler, Emma Laubach, Ida Godshalk, John Lobb, Anna Roe, John and Plantina Heller, Joseph W. King, Henrietta King, Mary E. Reeser, J. H. Werner, Emma Brown, Mary King, Plantina Hornbeck, Philip and Emma Buskirk, and Tillie C. Werner.

The Sunday School in 1885 had 10 teachers, 2 officers, 120 scholars, and an average attendance of 80, as of January 10.

The first Board of Stewards on record were J. H. Werner, Charles Bieler, Sr., Jacob Bruch, Daniel Bartholomew and J. W. Kressler. Charles Bieler, Sr., became its first secretary and continued until 1898. F. D. Bieler served one year and J. M. Kress, three years. E. J.Kress was elected in 1902, when the Stewards and Trustees began meeting jointly, and continued in the same capacity until 1955. Other early officials (A. D. 1900) are recorded as follows:

TRUSTEES: Prof. J. H. Werner, Rev. Charles Bieler, Lewis Young, Herman Seiple, George Miller.

CLASS LEADER: Wednesday evenings, Rev. Charles Bieler; Exhorter, James L. Miller.

CLASS LEADER: Thursday evenings, J. M. Kress; Exhorter, James Tonkin.

MISSIONARY AUXILIARY: F. D. Bieler, Leader; Lula Seiple, Asst. Leader; Hester Kress, Secretary; Samuel J. Harding, Treasurer.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: J. M. Kress, Supt.; Charles Bieler, Asst. Supt.; Bertha Werner, Secretary; Elizabeth Repsher, Treasurer; Sadie Werner and Hester Kress, Librarians; Celia Stevens, Organist.

In 1886 Ackermanville, Benders, Wind Gap, and Pen Argyl were separated from the Bath Circuit and became known as the "Pen Argyl Mission." Rev. C. D. Dreher was the first assigned pastor to the mission. The East Pennsylvania Conference appropriated $200 annually to the support of this work. In the year 1888 the congregation requested of Conference that German preaching be held once every fourth Sunday. The permission was granted, but the services have long since been discontinued.

The congregation grew slowly but steadily. The report sent to Annual Conference by J. S. Farnsworth, for 1896, included $8000 as the total property evaluation, $80.15 for current expenditures, $600 for pastor's salary, and a total of $1067.25 for all purposes. This report was accomplished by 89 members who were affiliated with the several congregations of the Pen Argyl Mission. Financial difficulty marked the churches, which struggled to make up several hundred dollars each year for pastoral support. Bethany Church carried the heaviest load, with the other churches of the mission lagging far behind. In 1900 the salary was set at $269. In 1901, however, the salary paid to Rev. J. I. Yotter was increased to $420, or $35 per month, which was paid monthly, if collected. By 1904 the Pen Argyl Mission had a total of 114 members.

During the ministry of J. E. Beam (1906-11) the church prospered. The salary of the pastor increased from $420 to $600; the church edifice was renovated and wired for electricity. The Men's Bible Class dates back to this pastorate, having been organized by Reverend Beam September 11, 1909. In 1912, under the leadership of

Rev. W. H. Kindt, a much needed parsonage was purchased. The property on the corner of Applegate and Lobb Avenues, purchased for $2575, became the home of our pastors for twenty years. The Seibert Bible Class was organized the same year on January 10.

Not only did the church continue to prosper materially, but it was blessed also with a great revival. In 1913 hundreds were converted and 152 new members were added to the church, bringing the total membership to 297. Every department of the church was greatly quickened. In 1914 Bethany Church was removed from the status of a mission, and was constituted a separate, self-supporting station, being freed from its relationship to the other churches of the Pen Argyl Mission.

In 1916 Bethany had the distinction of being host to the East Pennsylvania Conference, with Bishop S. P. Spreng as chairman. This was Rev. Kindt's final year as pastor at Pen Argyl (the five- year limit was then in force), and the report given of Bethany Church was excellent indeed. The following report is recorded in the Quarterly Conference records of 1915:

> "The membership has nearly trebled. The Church edifice has been renovated and beautified at a cost of approximately $2000."

The annual reports showed a membership of 269, Sunday School enrollment of 301, average attendance of 176.

Following Reverend Kindt's pastorate great tact and skill were required to conserve the results of the great revival that had been experienced. Rev. I. F. Bergstresser proved to be God's appointee, for not only were the results conserved, but at the close of his pastorate in 1919 there was a net gain in membership, and a fine spiritual atmosphere prevailed. The Sunday School reached its all-time high in the course of his pastorate — 386 in the year 1917.

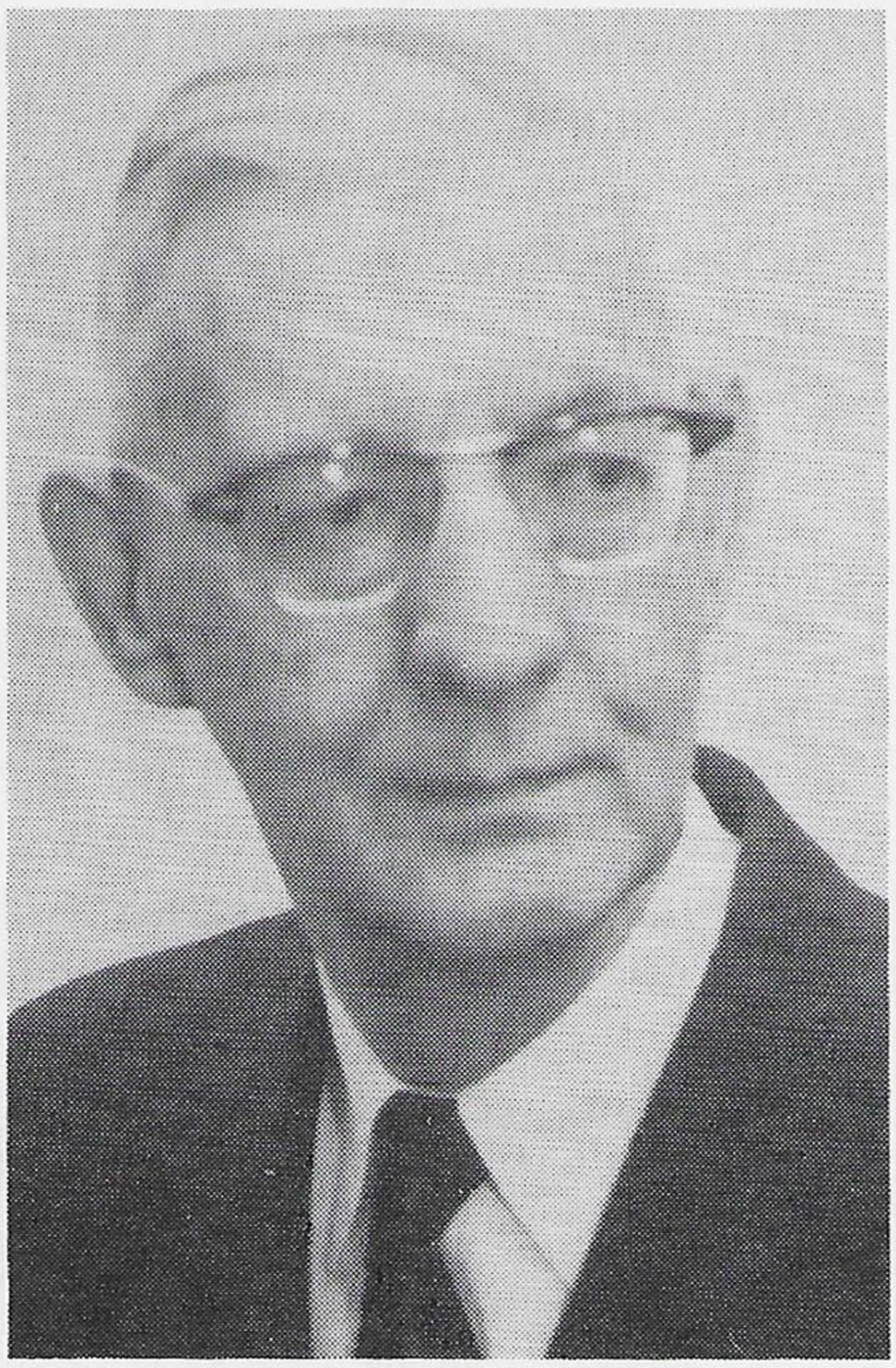
Another fine revival was experienced in 1920, when 58 new members were received by Rev. J. J. Kreisel. The Church, however, began to decline in membership, and continued thus for the next six years. In 1925 the membership stood at 198. Brighter developments within the Church were notable, however, during this period. The new Evangelical Hymnal, a result of the 1922 union of the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church to form the Evangelical Church, was introduced; a new piano and bulletin board were purchased. The basement of the church was renovated, costing nearly $400. In 1926, when membership stood at 200, the interior of the church was renovated and beautified at a cost of approximately $800. On re-opening day $1750 was received in cash and subscriptions. Everything was paid for, with a surplus of $600 to be applied to renovation of the exterior of the church.

Upon his arrival in 1927, Rev. H. W. Butt sought to continue with the improvement program begun by his predecessor, Rev. J. E. Heber-

ling. During the five years of his pastorate the church was stuccoed and painted, the tower lowered, the basement remodeled, and an addition built to the rear of the church. A new two-manual "Wicks Direct-Electric" pipe organ was installed and a new piano purchased. Approximately $15,000 was expended for these improvements. In addition many improvements at the parsonage were accomplished. The Seibert Bible Class and the Ladies' Aid Society worked hard and contributed heavily to help carry the financial burden of these projects. During this pastorate the salary rose to $2320. The Gleaners Class was organized on June 29, 1928; the Sunday School was further departmentalized and the church membership grew to 208.

The years from 1932 to 1940 saw a growth in interest and outreach under the direction of Rev. W. H. Christ. The membership grew to 261, and during this pastorate the Sunday School attained its highest average attendance — 203. Among the achievements of this period were the organization of an Albright Brotherhood, who sponsored a baseball team that became champions of the Pen Argyl Sunday School League; a Junior League which at its zenith had an enrollment of 272 members; a fine Junior Choir, and a number of active Sunday School classes.

During the first year of this pastorate the parsonage on Lobb and Applegate Avenues was sold, and the Pennington property, adjacent to the church property, was purchased for use as a parsonage. The cost was $5200. The pastor's salary reached a high of $2625 in the year 1938.



REV. E. E. MESSERSMITH

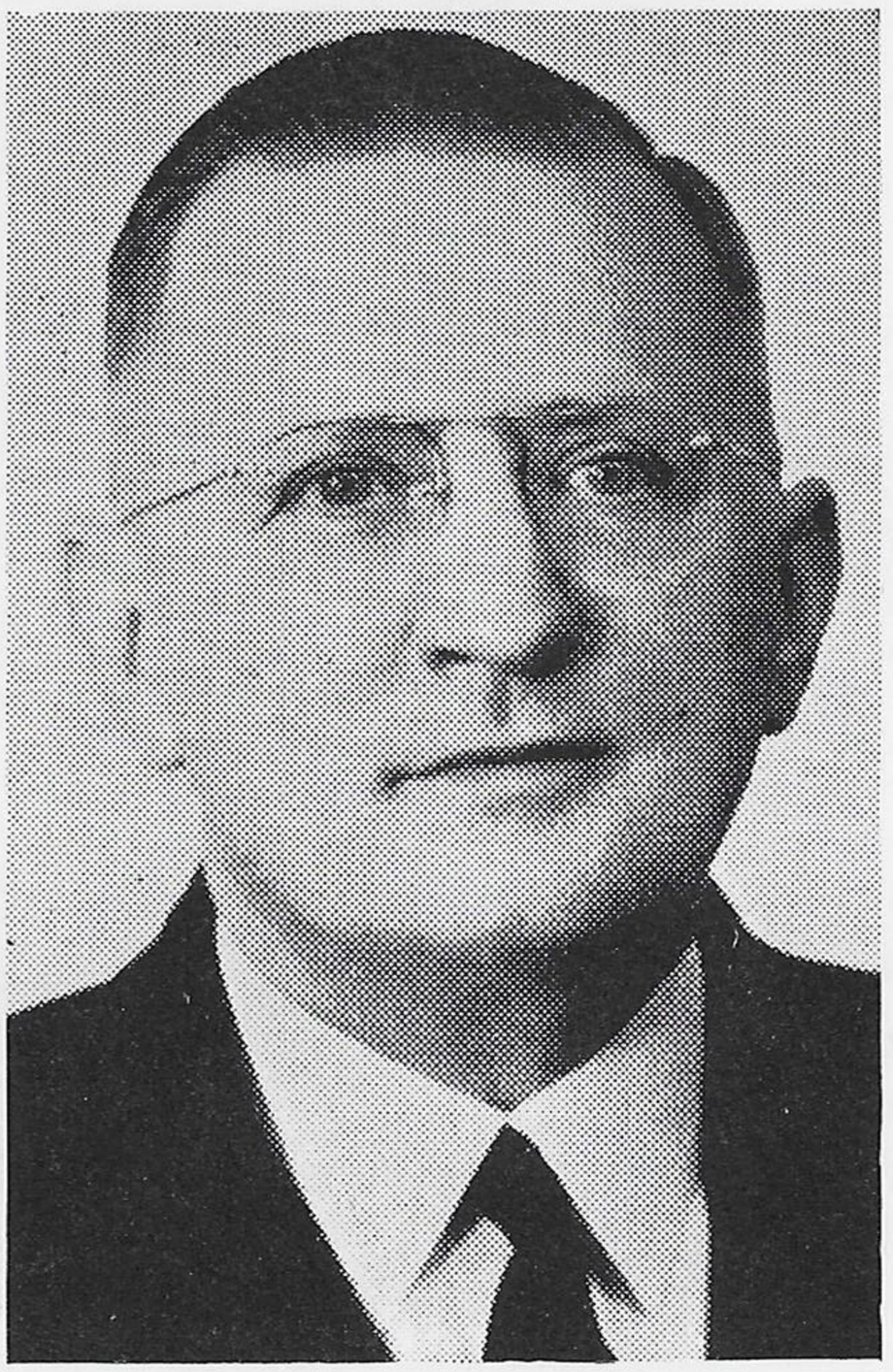
Rev. E. E. Messersmith was appointed to Pen Argyl by the Annual Conference meeting in 1940. A number of excellent improvements were made in the eight years of his labor on this field. The illuminated cross over the pulpit was installed as a memorial to Corporal Weston Lugg and Private Kenneth M. Smith, who laid down their lives in World War II. The lighting for the picture of Christ in the pulpit recess was donated and the balcony was enclosed and renovated to accommodate Sunday School classes.

The parsonage received considerable attention during these years, with several thousand dollars being expended for its improvement. The

salary of the pastor rose to $2700. Church membership stood at 261 at the close of this pastorate.

It is noteworthy that in 1946 the former Evangelical Church and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ merged to bring into being the denomination by which we are known, the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

Under the direction of Rev. W. E. Pottieger, who served this field until 1952, the Church continued on an even keel, with the membership growing to 275. Reverend Pottieger writes: "A goodly number were gotten to bow in penitence before the Saviour in their homes, and were saved. During these four years 41 professed conversion, 63 persons were received into the fellowship of the church."



REV. W. E. POTTIEGER

The Sexton's house, next to the parsonage, received a general overhauling, at a cost of about $1721, not including donated labor. (This figure also includes the conversion of the parsonage furnace to oil burning and installation of an oil water heater in the parsonage.) Another $350 was expended in 1951 on the parsonage and Sexton's house.

A church renovation program received impetus during the last year of this pastorate, and was well under way when the present pastor arrived on the field in 1952. About $750 had been raised for renovation purposes; and the Albright Brotherhood was in the process of installing in the basement a Celotex ceiling and siding, as well as new flourescent lights.

One of the important factors in the continuing program of renovation at Bethany Church was receipt of a bequest of $4500 from the estate of John H. and Annie M. Kresge. The money was received during the first year of the present pastor, Rev. E. L. Heiser. Of the $4500, approximately $2900 was used in purchasing the pews now in use, and the balance was expended on the modern equipment installed in our church kitchen. The congregation contributed $6708.75 in addition, to provide for the renovations necessary in the Church. In the sanctuary a new recessed lighting system, and Celotex ceiling were installed; the

floor, walls, woodwork, and picture of Christ were refinished. The kitchen was enlarged and remodeled; rest rooms and storage space, as well as adequate entrance to the furnace room were provided for in another annex to the rear of the church. A new Modernfold door in the basement enabled the formation of a Nursery and Junior Department, which meet in the divided room, and a Young Adult Class which meets in the Balcony.

INTERIOR — 1942

INTERIOR — EASTER, 1953

New carpeting in the sanctuary and a kneeling pad were provided by the Seibert Class. New chairs for the choir, Seibert class room, prayer meeting room and balcony were purchased jointly by the Seibert Class, the Young Adult Class and the congregation. The Mothers' Club provided equipment for the Nursery. The Albright Brotherhood in co-operation with the Gleaners Class installed a vinyl plastic tile floor in the basement. The Brotherhood also provided workmanship in laying tile in the kitchen and the Seibert class room.

Bethany Church expended another $6252.35 on renovations to the vestibule and exterior of the church, which has been beautified and protected with white aluminum siding. Included in the above figure is the cost of conversion of the church heating system to oil. Less than $1400 remains as debt on these improvements. The Young Adult Class financed the shrubbery in front of the church.

In addition to this fine display of giving, the congregation has made a large increase in benevolent and missionary contributions. The pastor's salary is presently $3500.

BETHANY CHURCH UNDERGOING A FACE-LIFTING — SPRING, 1955

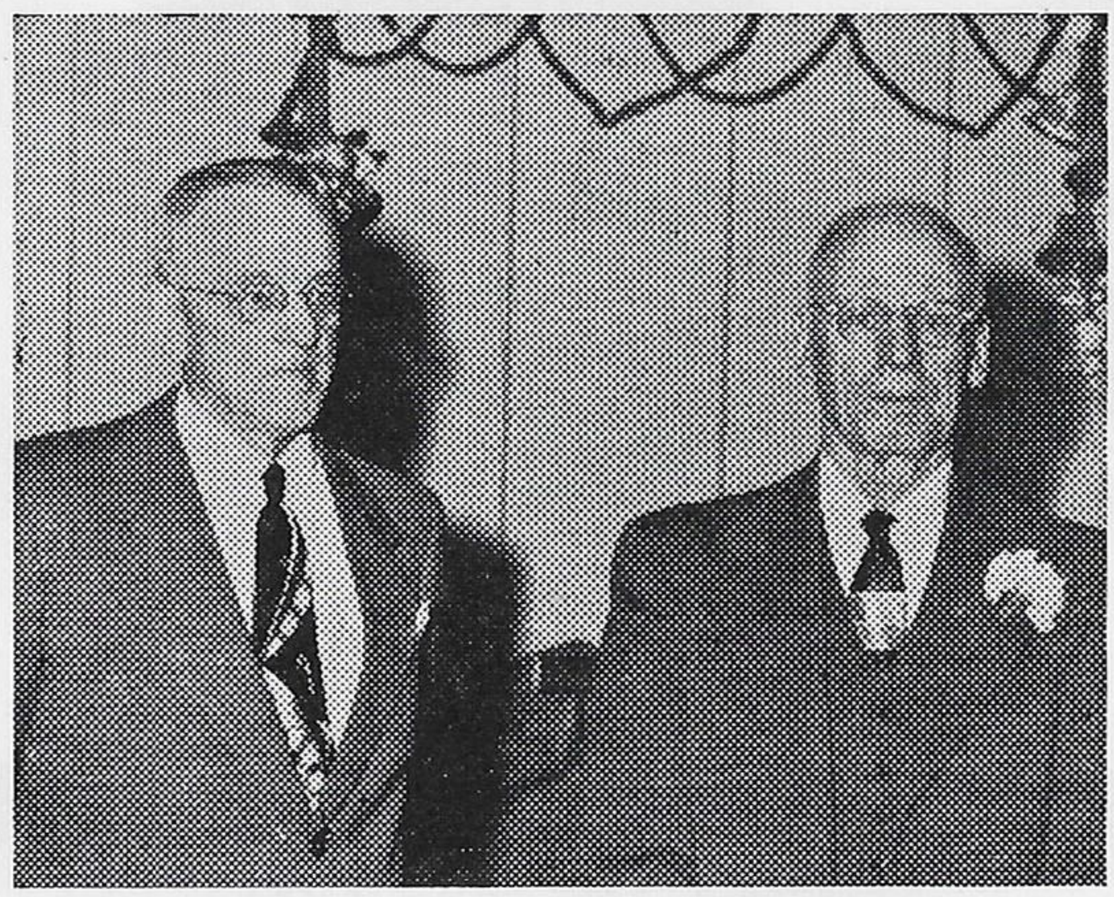
The years of this pastorate have been marked by advances in other areas also. There have been 80 professions of conversion, and 52 added to the church rolls to date. Many Christians, having been alerted to the privileges and demands of the spiritual life, have dedicated themselves to full-time Christian living with renewed vigor and vision. Membership presently stands at 278. Average attendance reported at the most recent Local Conference was 101 for morning worship, 59 at the evening service, 28 in prayer meeting, and 122 in the Sunday School.

During these seventy-five years there have been changes, both in the church building and the congregation, as well as in the individual lives of its members. There have been new ideas, new experiments, new projects, new faces, new life. But in the midst of the changes there has been a stability, an earnestness, an unwavering devotion that has characterized this congregation. Some of its earliest members, who dealt with the problems and rejoiced with the successes of the congregation as the occasions arose, are still among the members and officials of Bethany Church. They have maintained a rich heritage which they shall pass into the hands of a younger generation. But at the center of it all has been the old Gospel, the same Gospel preached for seventy-five years — presented differently by different men — but always performing the same task in the lives of men who believe. It is this Good news which holds the secret — the key — to a new life for all who receive it. So may Bethany Church continue to march forward shouting with Saint Paul and the saints of all ages:

> "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth . . . "

1881-1883	W. H. Weidner and W. H. Stauffer
1883-1884	W. H. Weidner and W. Schuler
1884-1885	R. Deisher and W. Schuler
1885-1886	R. Deisher and A. E. Williams
1886-1889	C. D. Dreher
1889-1891	A. E. Williams
1891-1892	W. K. Wieand and H. C. Lilly
1892-1893	B. C. Krupp and H. C. Lilly
1893-1894	H. B. Brown
1894-1896	J. W. Klein
1896-1897	J. S. Farnsworth
1897-1898	E. Freeman
1898-1900	J. S. Newhart
1900-1901	W. F. Teel
1901-1905	J. I. Yotter
1905-1906	H. M. Taylor
1906-1911	J. E. Beam
1911-1916	W. H. Kindt
1916-1919	I. F. Bergstresser
1919-1923	J. J. Kreisel
1923-1927	J. E. Heberling
1927-1932	H. W. Butt
1932-1940	W. H. Christ
1911-1938	Charles Bieler (Local Pastor)
1940-1948	E. E. Messersmith
1948-1952	W. E. Pottieger
1952-	E. L. Heiser

OUR SUPERINTENDENTS EMERITUS

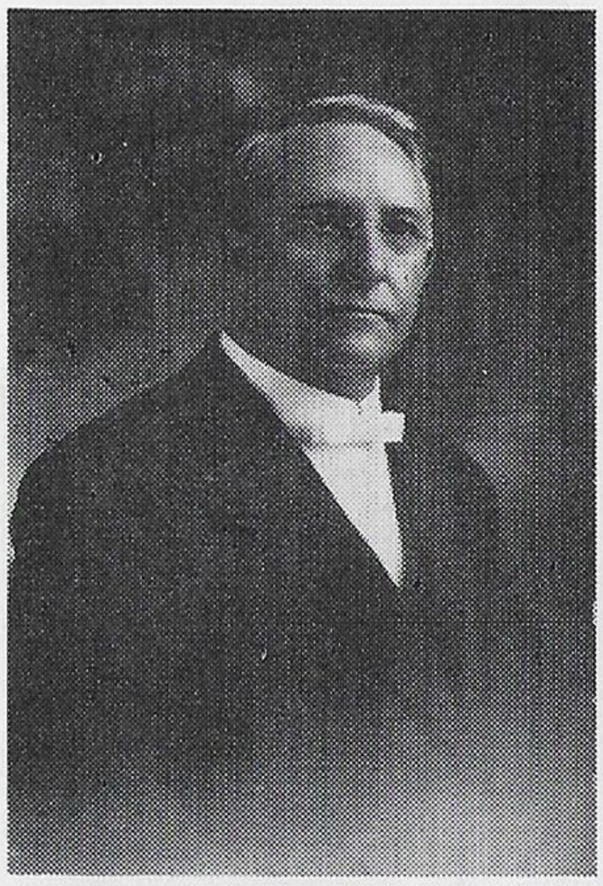


E. J. KRESS and F. D. BIELER
Superintendents Emeritus

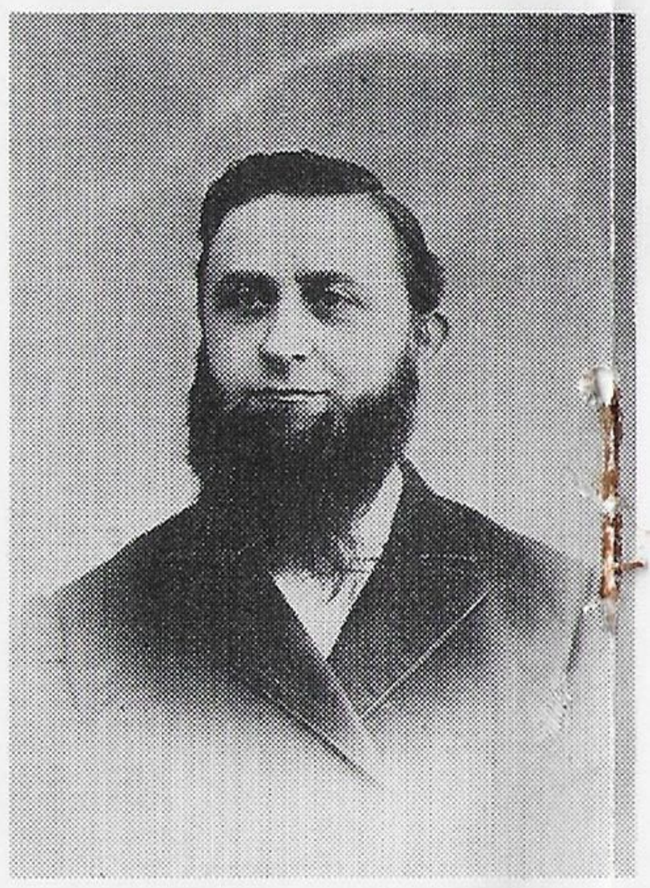
The photograph on this page was taken in January of 1953, on the occasion of the celebration of 50 years as Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of the Sunday School. Mr. E. J. Kress, who retired from office at that time was elected the relationship of Assistant Superintendent Emeritus. Mr. F. D. Bieler continued as Superintendent through 1955, when he too laid aside the responsibilities of the office and became Superintendent Emeritus.

Bethany Sunday School prospered through the years of this unique leadership. The resignations of these brethren were accepted with reluctance, but the consideration of the age and health of our beloved and respected leaders prompted an affirmative reaction. We are proud to have not only the distinction of such a marvelous record of service in our history, but also to have with us these two servants of God to participate in this historical milestone, our 75th Anniversary. May God bless them and give them both many years to serve and praise the Redeemer, Christ the Lord.

R. DEISHER

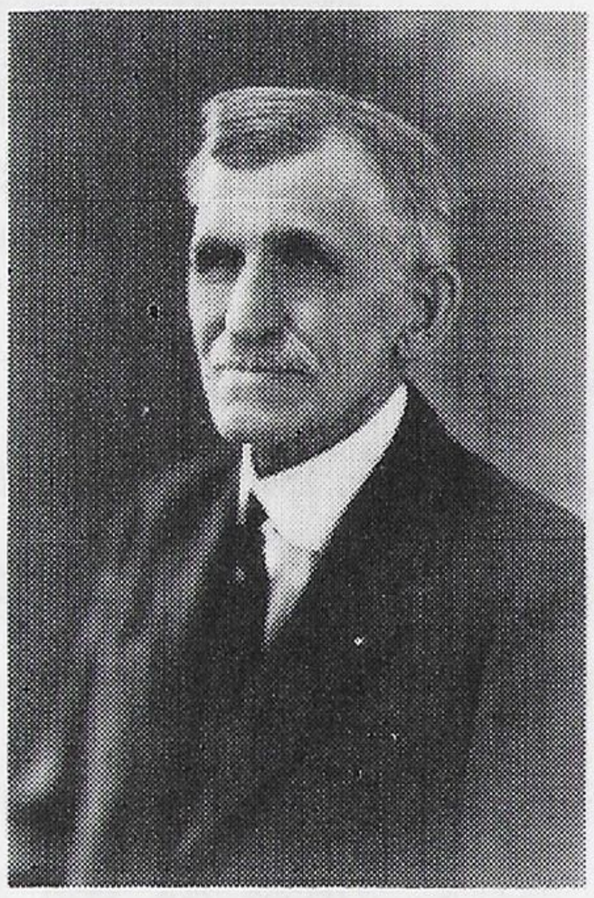


C. D. DREHER



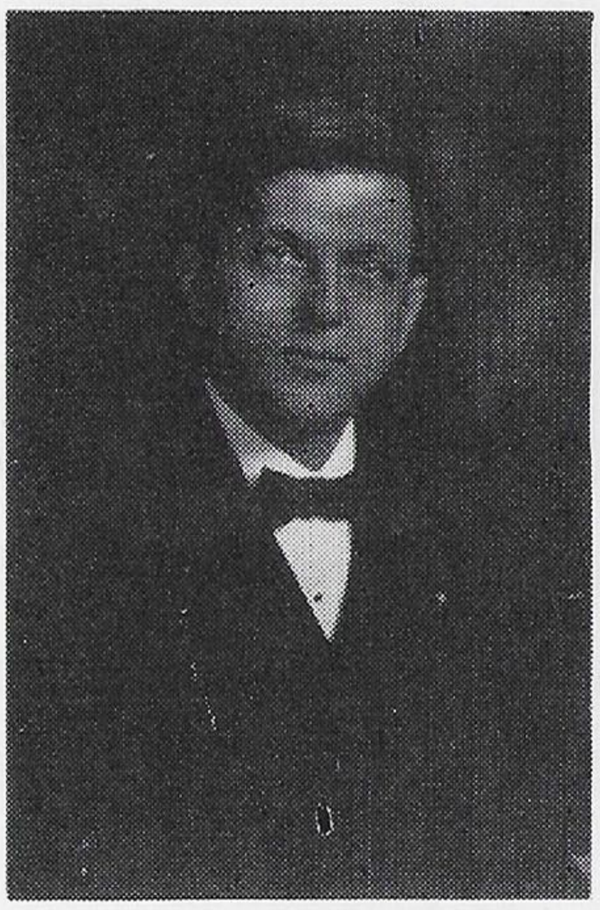
W. K. WIEAND

J. WARREN KLEIN



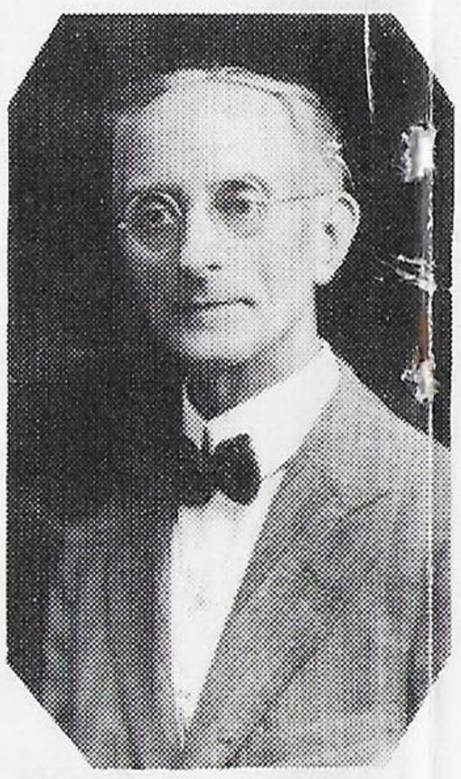
J. S. FARNSWORTH

J. S. NEWHART



W. H. KINDT

I. F. BERGSTRESSER



J. J. KREISEL

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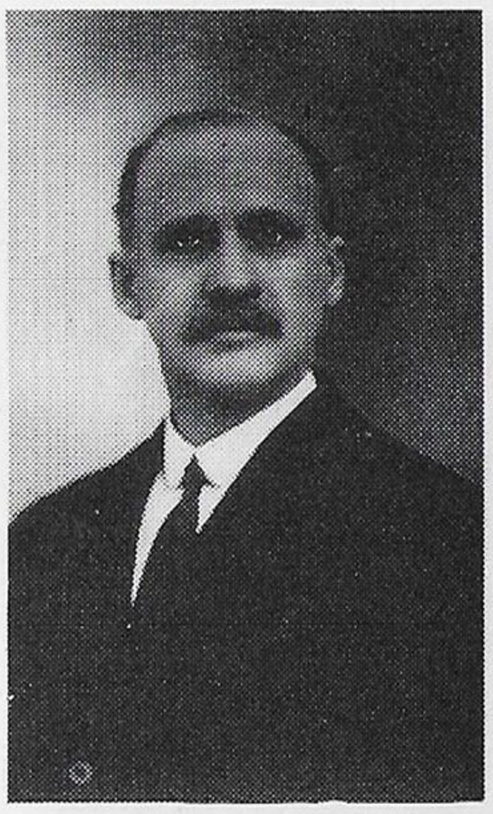
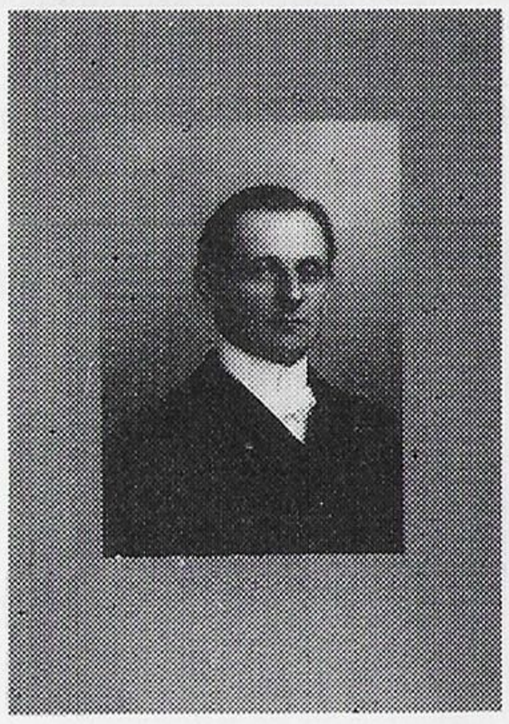
R. E. WILLIAMS



B. C. KRUPP

H. C. LILLY

W. F. TEEL



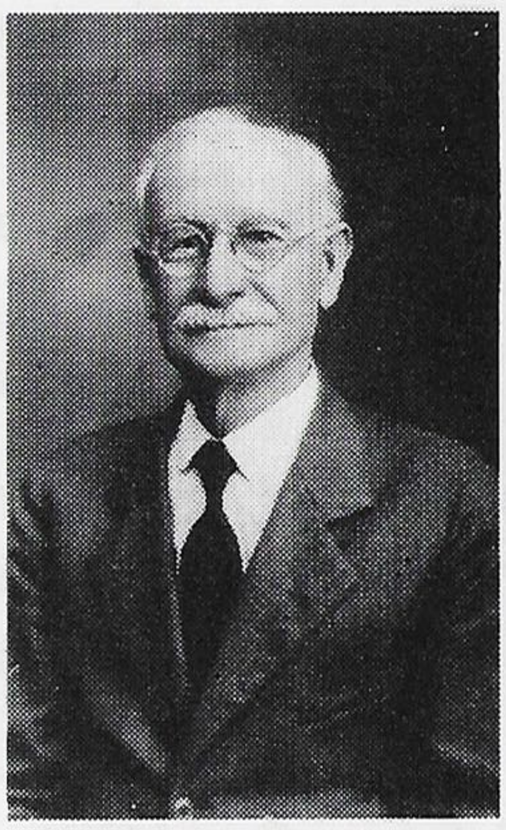
J. I. YOTTER

H. M. TAYLOR

J. E. HEBERLING

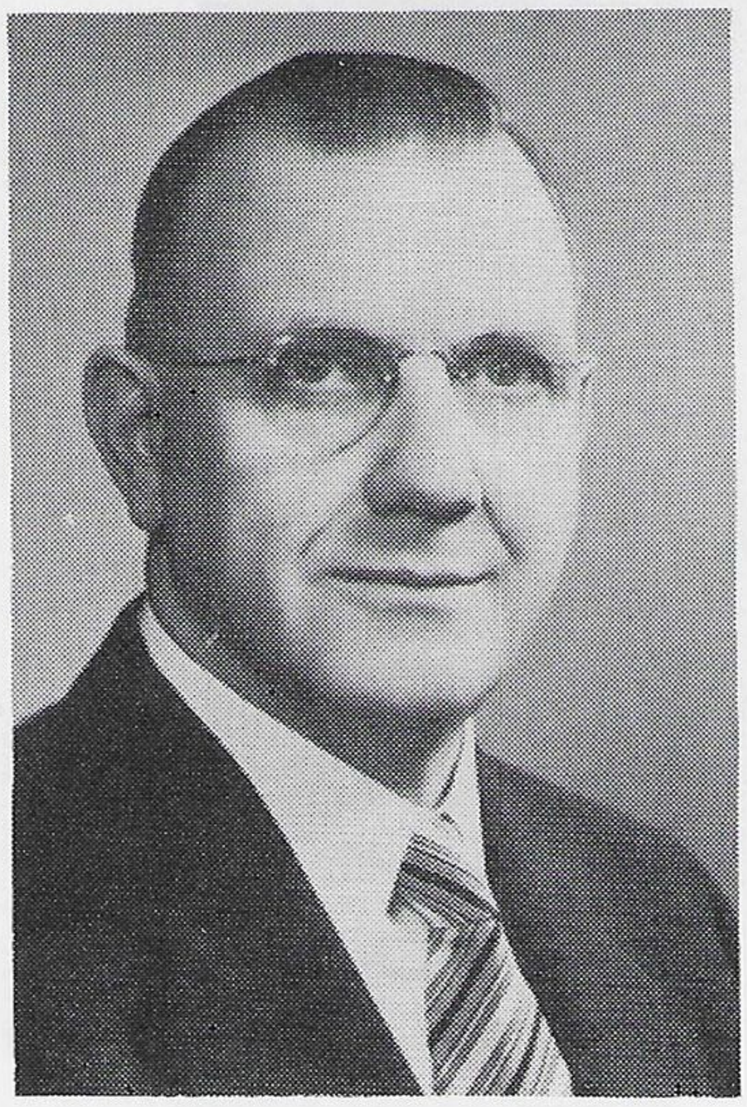
H. W. BUTT

W. H. CHRIST



CHARLES BIELER

ining the photographs of former pastors.
hurch prior to the remodeling in 1952.



REV. O. A. HYDEN
Conference Superintendent, Eastern District

75th ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM

Sunday, September 23

9:45 a.m. Dr. O. A. Hyden, Conference Superintendent, speaker
Greetings by Rev. E. E. Messersmith, former Pastor
Music by the the Senior and Junior Choirs of the Church

7:00 p.m. Rev. E. L. Heiser, Pastor, speaker
Special music by the Trinity Church Choir, Wind Gap,
Mrs. Marian Lewis, Directress

Tuesday, September 25

7:30 p.m. Rev. H. W. Butt, former Pastor, speaker
Special music by the Women's Trio, Kathryn Broad,
Ruth Deitz, and Mae Williams

Wednesday, September 26

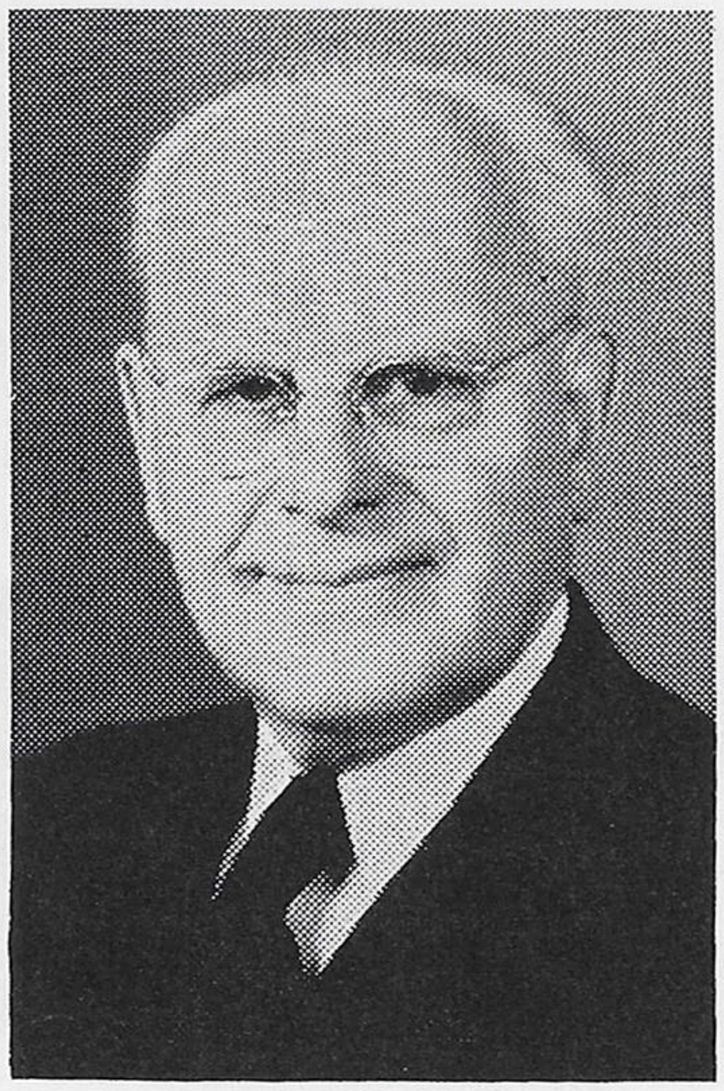
7:30 p.m. Greetings from the Pastors of Pen Argyl
Special music by Miss Jean Gardner, Wilson Boro

Thursday, September 27

7:30 p.m. Rev. W. H. Christ, former Pastor, speaker
Special music by the Bethany Church Male Chorus and
Quartet

Friday, September 28

7:30 p.m. Rev. W. E. Pottieger, former Pastor, speaker
Special music by the Bethany Church Junior Choir and
Miss Bonnie Slutter, Salem Church, Bangor



BISHOP GEORGE E. EPP

SEPTEMBER 23 - 30, 1956

Sunday, September 30

9:45 a.m. Bishop George E. Epp, Bishop of the Eastern Area of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, speaker
Greetings by Rev. J. W. Klein, former Pastor
Special music by Bethany Church Senior and Junior Choirs, with F. D. Bieler, soloist, singing "Bless this House"
Rededication of our Church Edifice,
Bishop George Edward Epp, officiating

7:00 p.m. Close of the Anniversary Celebration
Devotions led by Rev. E. L. Heiser, Pastor
Special music by the Apollo Male Quartet, Bangor

The Sunday School schedule for September 23 will follow its regular course, with the teachers instructing their respective classes. On September 30 the Sunday School session will be abbreviated, beginning as soon as possible after the close of the morning worship. There will be a program presented by the members of the Children's Departments being promoted this year. Time will be given for the classes to assemble and record attendance, there will be no lesson this Sunday.

There will be no services on Monday or Saturday of the Anniversary Week.

Pastors A. M. Herman, Salem Church, Bangor, and H. L. Ulmer, Ackermanville-Saylorsburg Charge will participate and bring greetings in the course of the Anniversary Week services.

75th ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

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Mr. E. J. Kress
Mrs. William Sandercock
Mrs. Elwood S. Doney

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SECRETARY—Clair Parsons

ASSISTANTS—William Ducey, Patricia Jennings

TREASURER—Mrs. Harold Albert

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BEGINNERS AND PRIMARY—Mrs. Thomas Leedy, *Supt.;* Mrs. George Tucker, Mrs. Perry Bellis, Marilyn Gross, *pianist*

JUNIOR—Mrs. Clayton Dawe, *Supt. and teacher;* Janice Alfred, *pianist*

INTERMEDIATE—Mr. and Mrs. David Humphrey

SENIOR—Mr. George Parsons, Mr. Karl Keller

YOUNG ADULT—Mr. and Mrs. Granville Jennings

YOUNG WOMEN—Mrs. Elwood S. Doney

GLEANERS—Mrs. Walter Lane and Mrs. Alice Aplin

SEIBERT BIBLE CLASS—Mrs. William Sandercock

ORCHESTRA—Mr. E. J. Kress

MEN'S BIBLE CLASS—Mr. Elwood S. Doney, Mr. George L. Young

SUBSTITUTES—Rev. E. L. Heiser, Mr. James Bonney, Mr. F. D. Bieler

PIANIST—Mrs. Raymond Ducey

ASSISTANTS—Mrs. Mackey Harding, Marilyn Gross, Janice Alfred

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